

Online Help Facility

Natural includes a comprehensive online help system which provides information about the Natural facilities and helps you select the appropriate function, command or item from any system screen.

The online help system consists of active help and passive help:

- **Active Help**
Lists selectable options in windows and is invoked by entering an asterisk * in input fields or instead of object parameters in function command syntax (see also the subsection Selection Windows and Wildcards in Section Command Logic);
- **Passive Help**
Displays general information on the selected item and is invoked
 - at screen level by entering the HELP command in the COMMAND==> or OPTION==> field and pressing Enter;
 - at field level by entering a question mark ? in the appropriate field and pressing Enter;
 - at message level by entering the HELP command followed by message number in the COMMAND==> or OPTION==> field.

The following subsections describe how to use the active and passive help systems.

Active Help

Active help always offers you a selection list of Natural commands, functions or objects. If you select an item from the list, Natural prompts for missing parameters/options for the selected function until the command can be executed.

Active help is usually invoked by entering an * in the command line and pressing Enter. The type of information displayed depends on the type of screen where you invoke active help.

The following subsections describe four examples of active help (in a Menu, Entry Panel, LIST and Editor session) in more detail.

Natural Menu

If you invoke active help in a menu, it lists all available function commands at your site. If you select a function from the list, you are prompted for the object (e.g. Natural or PDS) and then for missing parameters.

Below is an example of an active help screen invoked from the Natural ISPF Main Menu:

```

----- NATURAL / NATURAL ISPF Main Menu -----
OPTION  ==> +-----+
          ! ENTER FUNCTION:
          !  1 L  LIST
_  1  NATU !  2 B  BROWSE          17 ET EXTENTS          ! ID  VMU
_  2  NATU !  3 E  EDIT            18 FL FOLLOW           !      14:11:05
_  3  NATU !  4 D  DELETE          19 ST STATUS           ! nal DAEETCK7
_  4  NATU !  5 R  RENAME          20 CC COND.CODES       ! ry  SYSISPHU
_  5  NAT/ !  6 SB SUBMIT          21 RL RELEASE         !      148
          !  7 PL PLAY            22 HL HOLD             !
_  6  SAG  !  8 PR PRINT            23 DI DIFFERENCE      !
_  7  SYST !  9 CP COPY            24 PG PURGE             !
          ! 10 CM COMPRESS         25 CH CHANGE             !
_  8  NSPF ! 11 ZP ZAPS            26 DF DEFINITION      !
          ! 12 XT EXTERNS          27 RU RUN              !
_  9  NSPF ! 13 A  ALLOCATE         28 XE EXECUTE         !
          ! 14 CT CATALOG          29 EX EXPORT          !
_  HELP HELP ! 15 U  UNCATALOG      30 DS DESCRIPTION    !
_  NHLP HELP ! 16 I  INFORMATION    and others...         !
_  END  EXIT +-----+          Select ==> __          !

Enter-PF1---PF2---PF3---PF4---PF5---PF6---PF7---PF8---PF9---PF10---PF11---PF12---
      Help Split End  Suspe Rfind Rchan Up      Down Swap Left Right Curso

```

To display an explanation of a listed function, enter the function's number or code in the Select==> field and press PF1. This invokes the passive help system.

Natural Entry Panel

If you invoke active help from an Entry Panel, a list of all available function commands for the selected object is displayed. If you select a function from the list, it checks whether the fields in the Entry Panel already contain a sufficient object identification; if not, you are prompted for the missing parameters.

Below is an example of an active help screen invoked from the Natural View - Entry Panel:

```

----- NATURAL VIEW - ENTRY PANEL -----
COMMAND === +-----+
          ! ENTER FUNCTION:          !
          !  1 L  LIST                !
View Nam !  2 B  BROWSE              !
Dbid     !  3 CP COPY                ! (For selection list)
Fnr      !  4 DF DEFINITION          ! (For selection list)
Record F !  5 DS DESCRIPTION         !
Start va !  6 DW DOWNLOAD            !
End valu !  7 UP UPLOAD              !
Max Reco ! Select ==> __            !
Password +-----+

```

To display an explanation of a listed function, enter the function's number or code in the Select==> field and press PF1. This invokes the passive help system.

Line Command Help in LIST Session

Invoking active help in a list usually displays the same list as invoked from an Entry Panel.

Natural Editor screen

If you invoke active help from an EDIT/LIST/BROWSE screen, all available local commands for the selected object and function are displayed. If you select a function from the list, the function is executed.

Use PF7 / PF8 for scrolling if more than 10 commands are available, or PF3 to abort. If you press Enter without any selection, a list of all function commands is displayed.

Do not forget, if you need information about Editor commands just enter: HELP EDITOR.

Below is an example of an active help screen invoked from an edit session for a Natural program:

```

EDIT-NAT:NSPFEXAM(API-002P)-Program->Struct-Free-45K ----- Columns 001 072
COMMAND==> *                                SCROLL==> CSR
***** top of data *****
000010 DE +-----Local command help-----+
000020 LO !
000030 * ! 1 SM 6 TYPE !
000040 * ! 2 STOW 7 STRUCT !
000050 * ! 3 CHECK 8 OUTPUT !
000060 1 ! 4 CAT 9 IMPORT !
000070 1 ! 5 RUN 10 PLAY !
000080 1 ! more... !
000090 * ! Select __ or press enter for global help !
000100 * +-----+
000110 *
000120 1 #ERR-NUMBER (N4)
000130 1 #ERR-TEXT (A75)
000140 1 #ERR-PARM (A75)
000150 *
000160 * local data
000170 *
000180 1 #LGT (N2)
000190 1 #IN-DSN (A44)
Enter-PF1---PF2---PF3---PF4---PF5---PF6---PF7---PF8---PF9---PF10---PF11---PF12---
Help Split End Suspe Rfind Rchan Up Down Swap Left Right Curso

```

To display an explanation of a listed function, enter the function's number in the Select field and press PF1. This invokes the passive help system.

Passive Help

Passive help texts are available on three levels:

- Screen level;
- Message level;
- Field level.

The following subsections describe the three levels of passive help in more detail.

Screen-level Help

The hierarchy of the help screens reflects the hierarchy of Natural system screens. This means that you can invoke the online help facility from any system screen and you immediately see the help text defined for that screen. Invoke a screen help by issuing the HELP command (usually assigned to PF1) from any system screen, or by typing a question mark ? in the command line and pressing Enter. This displays a help text with general information on the screen from which you invoked the online help.

The help text displayed can be one of two types:

- User-defined help;
- Screen-dependent help text from the online help facility.

The user-defined help can be linked to a menu customized to your installation and is maintained in a separate library by the system administrator (see also the Natural ISPF Administration Documentation). If you issue the HELP command from any menu, the user help library is searched before the system help.

You can enter the online help facility at the top end of the hierarchy by issuing the HELP command (usually assigned to PF1) from the Natural ISPF Main Menu. This displays the main Help Menu on your screen with a list of selectable items:

```

Z*HELP-----Table-of-contents----->>> continued
COMMAND ==>                                     MAIN

                                NATURAL-ISPF HELP
                        Please select a topic by entering a numerical code

PART I: Working with NATURAL ISPF

    1  Help system
    2  Command Logic
    3  NATURAL ISPF Commands
    4  Useful Features

PART II: Common Functions

    5  User Workpool
    6  Recovery Files
    7  Profile Maintenance
    8  NATURAL ISPF Editor

PART III: NATURAL

Enter-PF1---PF2---PF3---PF4---PF5---PF6---PF7---PF8---PF9---PF10---PF11---PF12---
      Help Split End   Suspe Rfind Rchan Up      Down Swap Left Right Curso
  
```

The Help Menu can consist of several screen pages. Use the UP and DOWN commands (usually assigned to PF7 and PF8) to scroll the menu.

To select an item, enter its number in the command line at the top of the menu and press Enter. This displays a help text for the selected item.

The HELP command is also available with a number of parameters to allow you to call help texts on any Natural item from any system screen.

HELP [INDEX]
[object]
[:C]

where:

Parameter	Meaning
INDEX	Lists all objects for which there is a help text. You can specify any object in a HELP command to display the related help text.
object	The object for which a help text is required. This can be any object listed by the HELP INDEX command. Use the wildcard * to generate selection lists of objects with the same prefix (see examples below).
:C	Is substituted by the string marked by the cursor (see the subsection Cursor-Sensitive String Selection). If you use the :C directive, you need not enter the HELP command keyword.

Examples:

Command	Meaning
HELP LIST	Displays the help text for the command LIST.
HELP L*	Displays a selection list of all items and commands starting with L for which there is a help text. You can select any item from the list to display the associated help text.
HELP FEATURES	Displays help text for special Natural features.
HELP EXAMPLES	Displays an overview of example programs, macros and command scripts supplied in the Natural Examples Library.
HELP :C	With cursor on string edit , executes the command HELP EDIT.

A help text may consist of more than one page. If this is the case, you are notified by the message Continued.... Use PF7 and PF8 to browse through the help pages. A special local command is also provided here. The command

UP L or
BACK

scrolls up to the next higher level in the screen hierarchy. Alternatively, you can enter **L** in the command line and press PF7.

Some help screens provide direct access to help texts on a related item or on another level in the help screen hierarchy. You can enter the selected item in the command field at the top of the help screen and press Enter to see the associated help text.

Alternatively, you can enter HELP :C in the command line, place the cursor on a word in the help text and press Enter to display the help text on that word. Assigning the HELP :C directive to a PF key makes this cross reference even more comfortable (see the subsection PF Key Assignments in Section Command Logic).

To print a help text as displayed on the screen, enter the PRINT command and press Enter.

Note:

Words which appear in the help text in reverse video (on color terminals, yellow) have separate help texts defined for them. Place the cursor on the word and press the help key to display the corresponding help text.

To leave the online help facility, issue the END command (usually assigned to PF3).

Message-level Help

The online help facility also allows you to display information on error messages. This is done using the following command from any Natural screen:

Command	Meaning
HELP <i>nnnn</i>	Displays a help text for error message Number <i>nnnn</i> . This can be any existing error number of Natural, or any other related Software AG product installed at your site.

If a Natural or Natural error occurs, a special feature is provided that enables you to issue a HELP command without parameters. This displays a help text on the last error.

Field-level Help

You invoke a field help from a system screen by typing a question mark ? in the selected input field and pressing Enter. This opens a window with an explanation of the field and how to use it. Press Enter to close the window.